



The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work

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The most prolific woman writer of the eighteenth century, Eliza Haywood (1693-1756?) was a key player in the history of the English novel. Along with her contemporary Defoe, she did more than any other writer to create a market for fiction prior to the emergence of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett.

Also one of Augustan England's most popular authors, Haywood came to fame in 1719 with the publication of her first novel, *Love in Excess*. In addition to writing fiction, she was a playwright, translator, bookseller, actress, theater critic, and editor of *The Female Spectator*, the first English periodical written by women for women. Though tremendously popular, her novels and plays from the 1720s and 30s scandalized the reading public with explicit portrayals of female sexuality and led others to call her "the Great Arbitress of Passion."

Essays in this collection explore themes such as the connections between Haywood's early and late work, her experiments with the form of the novel, her involvement in party politics, her use of myth and plot devices, and her intense interest in the imbalance of power between men and women. Distinguished scholars such as Paula Backscheider, Felicity Nussbaum, and John Richetti approach Haywood from a number of theoretical and topical positions, leading the way in a crucial reexamination of her work. *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood* examines the formal and ideological complexities of her prose and demonstrates how Haywood's texts deft traditional schematization.

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